

Statement of Michelle Farmer
Ryder's Health System
before the
Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the committee:

My name is Michelle Farmer. I am employed in the accounting and finance office of Ryder's Health Systems, a company that owns and operates seven nursing homes in Connecticut.

We are not some huge out-of-state conglomerate. We are a family-owned business that for 59 years has cared for the frail elderly in this state.

I'm here tonight to address the proposed budget of the Department of Social Services.

I can tell you that Medicaid does not come close to paying the real cost of care of a resident. That is one reason so many nursing homes are in financial trouble or going bankrupt.

This budget proposal will just make the situation much worse. There is no Medicaid rate adjustment for the next two years. That is simply indefensible—and unfair.

All this will do is make it harder for us to care adequately for our residents.

Meanwhile, new mandates and rules are piled on us each year. It takes staff time and expense to comply with these.

Here's one example—it is a "cost report" for a single facility. I help write these reports—every penny a home spends is accounted for here.

If you want to help us, please provide a moratorium on any new rules or reports. Many trees already die unnecessarily.

Finally, there is one other thing you can do. At any given time, we are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars by the state for care we give to residents who have not yet had their Medicaid applications approved.

These are called "pending" cases. We ask that you provide a fairer system for compensating homes for the care they are giving these residents.

I'm proud to work for Ryder's Health Care. We do care about our residents. And, we need you to step up to the plate and help us. Please do the right thing. Thank you.